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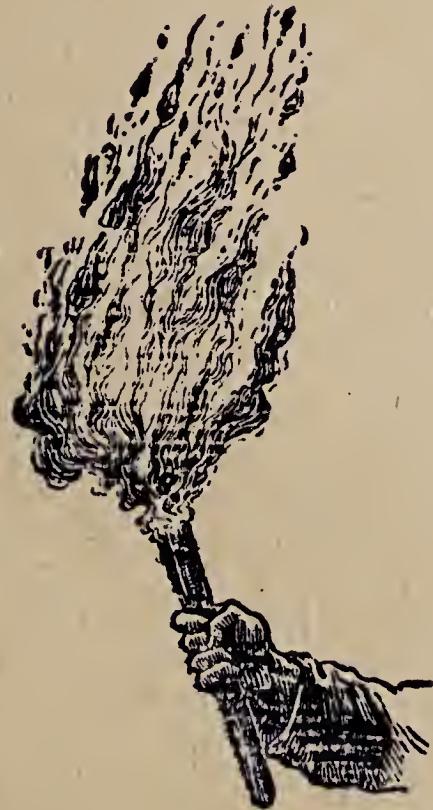
Torch-Bearer Booklets

ION KEITH-
FALCONER

BY

CUTHBERT McEVOY, M.A.

Author of "Mary Slessor,"
"Stewart of Lovedale," etc., etc.



The Carey Press, London



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Ion Keith Falconer

(Sketched from a Photograph)

ION KEITH- FALCONER

THE SCHOLAR-MISSIONARY

BY

CUTHBERT McEVOY, M.A.

*Author of "Mary Slessor,"
"Stewart of Lovedale," etc., etc.*

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In this Series.

MARY SLESSOR

GRENFELL OF LABRADOR

STEWART OF LOVEDALE

All by Mr. McEvoy

CHRIST IN AFRICA

Rev. W. Y. Fullerton



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The morning drum-call on my eager ear
Thrills unforgotten yet ; the morning dew
Lies yet undried along my field of noon.
But now I pause at whiles in what I do,
And count the bell, and tremble lest I hear
(My work untrimmed) the sunset gun too soon.—

I hear the signal, Lord—I understand.
The night at Thy command
Comes. I will eat and sleep and
Will not question more.—*Songs of Travel.*

CHAPTER I.

THE HARROW SCHOOLBOY.

ION KEITH-FALCONER, who was famous in his day amongst athletes as a cyclist and amongst scholars as an orientalist, was destined as a Christian missionary to be one of the inheritors of unfulfilled renown.

He was the third son of the Earl of Kintore, and was born at Edinburgh on the 5th of July, 1856. The abundant vital energy that carried him to such high distinction in so many fields descended to him through a long line of ancestors who played no small part in our rough island story. Under Malcolm II., in 1010, under Wallace and Robert Bruce; at Flodden, at Pinkie, and in the Civil War, the Keiths are found always in the high places of the field. Truth, honour and courtesy, which Chaucer makes the qualities of his perfect knight, were by long tradition an instinct of Keith-Falconer's blood. He was born into the comparatively peaceful times of the Mid-Victorian era, and in his earnestly evangelical home the eager spirit of his fathers, though strong as ever, found for itself more beneficent and less tempestuous channels than in the centuries gone by.

We look in vain amongst the records of his early days for those boyish pranks and mischievous adventures that we might expect. It seems as if from the first his exuberant energy was under such control that it was all directed along the course of purposeful endeavour.

At the age of five he is reading the Bible and explaining it to his brothers and sisters. Only a few years later he is extending the sphere of these precocious activities to the inhabitants of neighbouring cottages. His childish religion was evidently quite practical. After saving up his money to buy some ginger-nuts, one of his weaknesses, he was returning from the shop with his coveted purchase when he met a hungry-looking boy ; there was no hesitation and no half-measures : he gave him at once all he had.

His tutors and schoolmasters speak of Keith-Falconer as eager, industrious, clear-headed, noble-hearted, determined, devout. Entering Harrow in 1869, under the headship of Dr. H. Montagu Butler, afterwards Master of Trinity, he passed in 1872 into the Modern Sixth, where he remained one year. Though he did not reach the very front rank at school, he took the Ebrington prize for German, the Flower prize for German prose, and the prize for Problems. His position would have been

higher, but for a curious mental caprice he displayed for running off at a tangent into subordinate intellectual interests. One of these was the study of shorthand, to which he devoted himself with quite unusual zeal. It was almost as if he moved outside the ordinary channels of school competition and studied simply for the interest of the subject, and not with any view to personal success. This characteristic was in keeping with his marked independence of outlook. No one would have called him eccentric. But he quietly held his own and accomplished that most difficult feat in the public schools of his day of refusing to move with the crowd unless his inner light sanctioned it. Thus, on the occasion of a Confirmation which was to be held in the School Chapel, Ion astonished his tutor by declaring himself in heart and intention a member of the Free Church of Scotland, and on principle opposed to Episcopal rites.

His published letters of this period show no particular humour or originality, and deal for the most part in schoolboy fashion with details of school life, examinations, form position, work, and school contests. His letters touching on religious subjects, with their quotations, their underlinings and their introspection, are true to the type of Mid-Victorian evangelical piety.

At the age of seventeen he is reading Sir Algernon Blackwood's *Forgiveness, Life and Glory*, and *Shadow and Substance*, and writes:—

“The last of my texts for to-day on the roller is ‘Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.’ ~~I~~ I don’t feel as if I was *ready* for that. I mean I am so bad, but ‘I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.’ ”

Again:—

“I must say something about Jesus Christ, because I think *He* ought never to be left out; and that is the fault I find with parties and balls and theatres. Jesus Christ, Who is the All in All, is utterly left out. Lord, hasten the time when Thou shalt reign altogether, and when Thy servants shall *see* Thy face—for Jesus’ sake.”

At about the same period Keith-Falconer came into contact with the great work of Mr. Charrington in the East End of London. The directness and reality of that work, and the complete devotion of its founder, found an immediate and lasting response in the heart of the earnest Harrow boy, who himself was so true to Christ. He writes:—

“I like Charrington because he is quite devoted to Him, and has really given up all for His glory. I must go and do the same soon : how I don’t know.”

In the same month :—

“After dinner we went the rounds to inspect the tent for preaching, and Charrington lent it to a little missionary to hold a midnight meeting in on Thursday. We also visited the Mission Hall. In the evening a well-attended meeting in the tent ; foul air. After the meeting we went to the Hospital to see a man supposed to be dying. I have lots to do here. I did not get to bed till nearly one o’clock, having been up nineteen hours. We visited the Boys’ Home, which I think a capital place.”

Although this account may sound precocious in a boy of seventeen, and may seem a conventional echo of the style of the religious diaries and biographies of the day, the enthusiasm for betterment which it displays was with Keith-Falconer no mere conventional phase. We look through it as through an open door upon a strong and steadfast tide of interest that had welled up long before and was to sweep on with increasing, though

sometimes unsuspected, power amid all the activities of his life, until it should embrace and absorb them all.

At Harrow Keith-Falconer had distinguished himself chiefly in German and mathematics. It was now decided that before going up to Cambridge he should devote himself, under a private tutor, entirely to mathematics. For this purpose he went to live with the Rev. Lewis Hensley, senior wrangler in 1846, and at this time vicar of Hitchin, the old Hertfordshire town half-way between Cambridge and London.

His tutor noticed in him the same characteristics which had been observed at Harrow. He was eager, conscientious, diligent—always occupied, and yet never an intense student. There was the same tendency to side interests and hobbies which had tapped the full vigour of his work at school and which had kept him, as Dr. Butler said, shut out of the very front rank. Shorthand was still one of his enthusiasms and he would frequently talk of its advantages. He had brought a bicycle with him and, whilst at Hitchin, by his constant practice, developed those powers which afterwards made him the champion cyclist of England. The Tonic Sol-fa System was a new hobby ; he would rise at seven to take lessons in it, or might be heard singing to

himself as he lay in bed. With these competing interests trigonometry and analytical conics had to take their chance. It was not that the young student was fickle or unstable. It was not that he lacked concentration. The same tutor who says that he was not an intense student of mathematics speaks of the "perfervid" resolution with which he threw himself into whatever interested him. But at Hitchin as at Harrow, and as earlier still in his own home, there was one interest to which he was constant and which his contemporaries do not seem to have recognised as the master-interest of his life. It is recorded of him at Hitchin that after attending the Parish Church on Sunday mornings he would gather together a meeting of poor people in the open air, or in a schoolroom in one of the outlying parts of the town, and conduct a service, with Moody and Sankey hymns. On week days he would visit the sick and sing or read to them, and the poor he would relieve with his purse. It is upon this truly missionary interest that attention must be fixed, if an explanation is to be given of a life that, in its early years at least, disappointed some of his friends, who seemed hardly able to interpret success except in terms of scholastic achievement and material reward.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAMBRIDGE STUDENT.

TO an eager and receptive boy fresh from school, life at Cambridge presents an extraordinary attraction. Cambridge is to him the scene in which his heroes have won their laurels on field and flood. It stands to him also for the beginning of a life of independence, and of independence amidst the most inspiring associations. The grey old colleges that lift their mediæval fronts in narrow winding streets, amid a clutter of old shops that have sprung up around them, are hoary with tradition. Their quiet courts seen through massive doorways are worn with the feet of generations. Their oak staircases are ghostly with the steps of the past. Spenser was here and Milton, and Byron and Gray, and Wordsworth and Tennyson ; Erasmus had rooms in the old red tower of Queen's ; Newton was at Trinity ; Darwin at Christ's ; Adams, the Discoverer of Neptune, at St. John's ; Cromwell at Sidney Sussex ; Kingsley at Magdalene.

The names of the living have for the schoolboy a greater fascination even than the names of

the great dead. The authority that has been quoted to him as final in this or that field of scholarship is here clothed in flesh and blood, and is to be seen in cap and gown passing through the streets, or to be heard in the lecture room, or even to be conversed with in his sanctum. The young student has all the delight and inspiration which comes from being at a fountain head, and of being able to drink to his fill of the cup of knowledge. Added to this is the joy of the social life. There is a boundless field of the best from which a man may choose his friends ; a variety of interests provides for that.

In the early morning the bell sounds for College Chapel, and he may join in the quiet worship. Then may come a breakfast party in his own or a friend's rooms before lecture. The morning hours are devoted either to undisturbed study in a peaceful room, the silence only broken by the soft cadence of bells that tell the quarters from their ancient towers, or else to hearing some subject handled by a master mind. The afternoons are devoted to recreation on one of the chain of college playing fields in the Backs, or on the Tennis Lawns, or the running track on Fenner's, or on the river, amidst the "measured pulse of racing oars among the willows."

In the evening after the "tumult of the

halls" there is a host of societies, literary, scientific, musical and others, which bring men together in eager and delightful association. And then there comes the time of study again, when a man may know the pleasure of the Lucretian "noctes vigilare serenas." On Saturdays the town is flooded with a bronzed and ruddy-faced throng from the surrounding villages, the names of which Rupert Brooke has made famous. The old Market Place under the shadow of St. Mary's is on that day filled with stalls of all kinds of commodities, and a babel of sound goes up from the crowd of vendors and buyers. Sunday is a day of unusual quiet. Ever since the days of Charles Simeon there has been a deep current of evangelical religion running through Cambridge undergraduate life. It has found expression in various societies and in beneficent activities on behalf of the poorer population of the town—notably in Adult Schools, Missions and Ragged Schools.

For the earnest student, if he be a man of many interests, life at the University is full of attraction and full of temptation. He has a great deal to accomplish in the way of serious reading, and he has to respond to some at least of the many social calls that are made upon his time. If he is wise he is not long in learning, amidst the embarrassing multitude of attrac-

tions, where he is to draw the line. Someone has said that one of the most important lessons a man learns at Cambridge is how to use the time which he has at his disposal.

Upon this life of entralling interest Ion Keith-Falconer entered in the October term of 1874, at the age of eighteen. He was entered on the books of Trinity College, and took rooms, not in the College itself, but on the north side of Market Square, in a house facing the Guild-hall. He had come up with a view to taking the Mathematical Tripos at the end of his third year. But at the end of his first year, although he obtained a First-Class in the Annual College Examination, and was besides a Prizeman, he resolved to follow a line of study with which he felt more in sympathy. Such a course is quite unusual, and from the point of view of success, is fraught with considerable danger. The mass of reading requisite to take a good place in Honours in any subject was sufficient in those days to occupy any man fully for three years. Nevertheless, after careful thought and consultation, Keith-Falconer decided to devote the remaining two years of his undergraduate course to reading for Honours in the Theological Tripos. The examination for which he was reading lasted seven days, each day having two papers of three hours each. There were thus fourteen

papers in all. In addition to these there was an extra paper in Hebrew for those who were sitting for the Hebrew prize. The range of reading was wide. One of the papers demanded a general knowledge of the Old Testament, three were devoted to Hebrew subjects, three to Greek Testament, and the remaining seven to miscellaneous Divinity and Church History.

The general Old Testament paper consisted of questions on the criticism and exegesis of the various books, on the history of the Hebrew text, and of the Greek and English versions ; as well as on the history of the Jews down to the Christian era. The three Hebrew papers were respectively on Genesis, Isaiah, Zechariah and Ecclesiastes.

In the third of these papers, questions on the Septuagint version of the books named were also set. Into all of these, in addition to pieces for translation from the Hebrew, and critical and exegetical questions, there entered more or less largely what is technically called “pointing” ; Hebrew was originally written without the vowels ; while Hebrew was a living language the reader was able to supply the vowels, just as we could supply them to-day if we saw the letters C-mbr-dg - ; when Hebrew was becoming a dead language, scholars invented a system of groups of “dots” or “points” arranged above, below, or in the bosom of the

letters, so that the traditional pronunciation might be preserved. As the vowels would change constantly with the many inflections of the word, it requires a very accurate knowledge of the language to know what "points" are to be supplied to any given word. And so this exercise is one which tests the soundness and accuracy of a student's Hebrew knowledge thoroughly. In the additional Hebrew paper pieces of English were set to be turned into Hebrew.

Of the three papers on the Greek Testament one was of a very general kind, including questions on the history of the New Testament Canon, on the criticism of the text, on the language and on the contents of the several books. The other two were, respectively, on the Gospels and the remaining books of the New Testament.

Two papers were set on Church History, the first a general one on the first six centuries of the Christian Church, and the other on special subjects—the life and times of Pope Gregory VII. and of Archbishop Cranmer.

The five remaining papers were: one on the Ancient Creeds and the Confessions of the Reformation Period; one on Liturgiology, dealing with the structure of the chief ancient Liturgies, and with the History of Christian Worship; two on selected Patristic works—

one in Greek, the first *Apology* of Justin Martyr and three of the polemic treatises of Athanasius ; and in Latin a book of Irenaeus's work, “*Against All Heresies*,” and two of Bede's *Church History*. Lastly, there was a paper set on modern theological writings—Butler's *Analogy* and the first two sections of Bishop Bull's *Defensio Fidei Nicenae*.

This great mass of reading, demanding as it did the most patient toil, was not attempted by most men reading for an Honours Degree, even when they had the advantage of three full years in which to accomplish it. Although Keith-Falconer had only a little over two years he determined to cover the whole ground fully. He was not merely a careful plodding student. He read critically. He would not take anything for granted. As this kind of reading is the best and most scholarly, so it makes the greatest demands upon the student.

When the Tripos List was published Keith-Falconer's name was among the six in the first class, and the prize for Hebrew was also awarded to him. In addition to this brilliant success he had also, in the course of the two years, won one of the two Jeremie prizes for proficiency in the Greek of the Septuagint.

CHAPTER III.

THE CYCLING CHAMPION AND SHORTHAND EXPERT.

A WISE Master of a Cambridge College once said in the course of an address to freshmen that it was hard to determine which was more to be pitied—the man who gave all his time to books, or the man who gave all his time to sport. Keith-Falconer had discovered the secret of giving his time wisely to both. Though he regarded sport sanely, as a means of fitting him to do his duty better, he yet threw himself into it with real delight, and won distinction in that sphere no less than in his study.

His particular form of recreation was cycling. In this branch of athletics he had attained to such proficiency that his fame had gone before him, and had brought him the unusual honour of being elected Vice-President of the Cambridge University Bicycling Club before he came into residence. A month after going up to Cambridge he won his first race, covering ten miles of road in thirty-four minutes, a feat which in those days was considered very good.

This was only the prelude to a succession of victories. In 1875 he won the race for the University against Oxford—the course being from St. Albans to Oxford, a distance of fifty miles. In 1876 he won the Amateur Championship Four-miles Race at Lillie Bridge, doing the distance in record time. In 1878 he entered at Stamford Bridge for the Two-mile race of the National Cyclists' Union: this also he won, and with it the title of "Short-distance Champion." But his greatest victory of all was that which he won in the October of 1878 on the track at Cambridge. It was a Five-mile race between Amateurs and Professionals, and finally resolved itself into a contest between Keith-Falconer and John Keen, the professional champion.

Fortunately, an account of this feat has been preserved in a letter of Keith-Falconer's which curiously touches three of the writer's commanding interests—his cycling, his shorthand, and his evangelical work. It is a letter written to Isaac Pitman, the inventor of phonography, thanking him for a subscription which he had sent to the Barnwell Mission. He writes:—

"Early in the year I consented to meet John Keen, the professional champion of the world, in a five-mile bicycle race on our ground at Cambridge, on October 23rd. But

I forgot all about my engagement till I was accidentally reminded of it nine days before it was to come off.

“ I immediately began to make my preparations and to train hard. The first great thing to be done was to knock off smoking, which I did ; next to go to bed not later than ten, which I did ; next to eat wholesome food and not too much meat or pastry, which I did ; and finally, to take plenty of gentle exercise in the open air, which I did.

“ What was the result ? I met Keen on Wednesday last, and amid the most deafening applause, or rather yells of delight, this David slew the great Goliath : to speak in plain language, I defeated Keen by about five yards.”

Perhaps Keith-Falconer’s greatest feat of physical endurance was that which he performed four years later, in June, 1882, when he rode from Land’s End to John o’ Groat’s in thirteen days at an average speed of more than seventy-six miles a day. A lively account of the ride appeared in the *London Bicycle Club Gazette*. Starting from Land’s End, he passed through Truro, Exeter, Wells, Banbury, Rugby, Grantham, Doncaster, Durham, Morpeth, Berwick, Edinburgh, Bridge of Allan

and Dingwall. He met with all the usual cyclist's difficulties (punctures were then happily unknown)—wet weather, strong head-winds, sprained muscle, broken spring. He describes, with evident relish, the lavish hospitality he enjoyed in a miner's cottage, where he spent a night: “I did not count the cups of tea or the planks of cake I consumed—I was afraid of getting into double figures.” He reached Wick, nineteen miles from his goal, about midnight on the thirteenth day. “After refreshing myself for an hour and a half at the Station Hotel, I started again, to the blank astonishment of landlord, boots, and waiters. The utter solitude, stillness, and dreariness of the remaining nineteen miles made a most remarkable impression on me. Not one tree, bush, or hedge did I see the whole way—only dark brown moor and a road as straight as a rule. At twenty minutes past three I stood, stiff, sore, hungry, and happy, before John o' Groat's House Hotel. I had no difficulty in arousing the landlord and was soon asleep.”

It would be an interesting psychological investigation to discover if the love of swiftness was the connecting link between Keith-Falconer's interest in cycling and his interest in shorthand. As a boy at school he had taken up shorthand as a hobby. Even before he

entered the University he had attained to considerable proficiency in its use. Sir Isaac Pitman, who met him at this time during a three weeks' stay at Bournemouth, testified that he was not only proficient in its practice, but had entered with unusual insight into its theory. He was in the habit of taking down sermons in shorthand. On one occasion this occupation was misunderstood by a short-sighted lady, who reported that a very naughty boy had sat near her and was drawing pictures all through the sermon. He was not only able to *write* shorthand with ease, but, what is sometimes more difficult, to *read* and reproduce *vivâ voce* what he had written. It is reputed that many of his lectures were written in shorthand, and were read as fluently as if they had been written in the ordinary script. The serious esteem in which Keith-Falconer's knowledge of the subject was held is evidenced by the fact that later on in his Cambridge life he was invited to write the article on Shorthand for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Even the uninitiated can gain some idea of the immense labour involved in this piece of work by glancing at the thirteen columns in the Ninth Edition of that *Encyclopædia*. The article ranges with characteristic thoroughness and lucidity over the whole history of shorthand from the

sixteenth century ; it gives a clear account of the various systems in other countries—Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark—and includes a detailed description of Pitman's System. But perhaps the most amazing thing of all to those who know the main field of Keith-Falconer's work, is the Bibliography which immediately precedes those initials ; it consists of thirty-one lines of close print, referring to a whole library of reviews, journals and books, English, American and German, which deal with the history and method of shorthand, and which might well represent in reading and selection the close study of a year for a man who had nothing else to do. That this was the *parergon* of a man profoundly absorbed in a wholly different sphere of labour is only another testimony to that “perfervid resolution” which an early friend had acutely observed to characterise the abandonment with which he threw himself into any undertaking that interested him.

Both in his cycling recreation and in his shorthand hobby Keith-Falconer unconsciously displayed the eager economy of time which his spirit prompted, as if by some instinct of the brevity of its earthly tenure. The one gave him the maximum of bodily exercise with the minimum expenditure of time ; the other enabled him to crowd into his short life an

amount of work that would otherwise have been impossible. Without the faintest trace of anything morbid, utterly removed in disposition from the hectic or the ascetic, throwing himself with a frolic joy of whole-hearted energy into whatever he undertook, he yet laboured as one who knew that the night cometh when no man can work.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEMITIC SCHOLAR.

GREAT as had been Keith-Falconer's scholastic achievement in the Theological Tripos of 1878, he was to go on to greater achievement still. His work for the Theological Tripos had discovered to him the main intellectual passion of his life—the study of Semitic languages. As soon, therefore, as the Tripos of 1878 was over he began to read for two important examinations—the Tyrwhitt University Scholarship in Hebrew, in 1879, and the Semitic Languages Tripos, in 1880.

The Tyrwhitt Scholarship, which had been held in the past by such distinguished scholars as Bishop Harold Browne of Winchester and Dean Perowne, marks the highest distinction to be obtained for Hebrew in Cambridge. As may be supposed, the examination is of a most searching character. It demands in the candidate the ability to translate any part of the Bible from the original Hebrew; to "point" any passage of unpointed Hebrew; and, last but not least, to turn passages of English into Hebrew. In addition to this the candidate

is expected to be familiar with those varieties of the Hebrew language known as Rabbinic and vernacular. Setting himself to study with the same methodical diligence as before, he was, as a result of the examination, elected to the high distinction of Tyrwhitt University Scholar.

The Semitic Languages Tripos of 1880, while covering some of the same ground as the Tyrwhitt Scholarship examination, gave scope for a wider range of Oriental study. The examination lasted seven days and included papers on Syriac composition as well as composition in Hebrew. Questions were set in the various Syriac versions of Scripture, Curetonian, Peshito and Harklensian; on non-Biblical works such as the Doctrine of Addai, parts of Aphraates and Joshua Stylites. Some knowledge of Arabic was expected, and the examination concluded with one paper on the comparative grammar of the languages concerned and another on their literary history. Here again Keith-Falconer was eminently successful. He was placed in the first class, and his work was considered "distinctly brilliant and of decided promise."

It is interesting to observe how amid these apparently remote academic successes the brilliant student was being unconsciously led towards that final self-devotion which crowned his life and constitutes to-day his chief title

to remembrance. Mathematics, Theology, Hebrew—which way did the cloudy pillar now lead? We find that the Semitic Languages Tripos had developed in him a passion for Arabic. To Arabic, therefore, under the tuition of the learned Professor Wright, he gives himself with all his accustomed assiduity. Here was a field of work that even to him seemed vast. Even after two years at it he writes that it is “most appallingly hard.”

That he might leave no stone unturned, no opportunity unused of perfecting his knowledge from all possible sources, he resolved on taking a course of Arabic lectures at a German University, both because so many works of importance on the subject have emanated from German universities, and because a more perfect knowledge of the German language would be of value to him as a serious scholar. Selecting Leipzig as the best centre for his purpose he spent five months there in assiduous study of Arabic. Writing in February, 1881, he says:—

“ I think I can claim having laid a good foundation in Arabic. Three days in the week we go to Professor X—to read Koran. We have read about fifty pages in Fluegel’s large edition. Besides this we read in a Chrestomathy book by Arnold.”

At the same time he did not neglect his opportunities of cultivating the acquaintance of the German people and their language. He called on Dr. Fleischer, the Arabist, and found him, although eighty years of age, "as fresh and merry as a cricket." Professor Windisch, the celebrated Sanskrit scholar, he describes as "a very pleasant and exhilarating person." One of his most valued friendships was that with old Dr. Delitzsch, the famous Lutheran leader, whom he met with by chance and took with him to his rooms for a long talk. The picture he gives of him is interesting. "By far the greatest theologian here. Very small of stature; white hair; neck encased in white bandages; his head is broad and flat, and not high and intellectual-looking. He is very poetical and mystical in his conversation, and very kind and homely in his manner."

Keith-Falconer lodged in the family of a well-to-do business man, who had been hit by the war of 1870. From him, his wife and daughters, as they knew no English, he was able to add considerably to his knowledge of German.

It must not be supposed that Keith-Falconer was a mere scholastic automaton. He had a warm heart ever at leisure from itself. It was about this time that the boy who had given all his lollipops to a hungry tramp now

as a young man displayed in a singular degree that generosity that characterised him all through his life. Hearing that the well-known scholar, Dr. Lagarde, Professor of Oriental Languages at Göttingen, found a difficulty in meeting the cost of the publication of his books, Keith-Falconer was instrumental in raising for his assistance a sum of £1,000, towards which he contributed £100 himself.

This champion of students was nothing if not thorough. The beginning of the year 1881 had seen him pressing eagerly forward in his study of classical Arabic at Leipzig. The close of the same year found him in pursuit of the knowledge of colloquial Arabic in Egypt. After visiting Cairo with its mosques and pyramids he reached Assiout in November, and took up his quarters in the neighbourhood of Dr. Hogg, a Scottish missionary and a first-rate Arabist. Dr. Hogg preached in Arabic, taught in Arabic and conducted a Sol-fa class in Arabic. True to his national characteristic, Dr. Hogg had a passion for philosophy and had translated Calderwood's *Handbook of Moral Philosophy* into Arabic. The accomplished missionary touched the enthusiastic young scholar at yet another point. He was a phonographer, and had employed shorthand when a student at Edinburgh.

It is impossible to estimate how much the

influence of this lonely missionary may have contributed unconsciously towards turning Keith-Falconer's thoughts during these few weeks in the direction of his final destiny. We can only conjecture that we trace the movement of a guiding Hand as we see one by one the evangelical interest, the Sol-fa, the German, and the Shorthand of his schoolboy days uniting with the Semitic studies of his later years, and used as instruments to shape a path which he knew not, but by which he was to go.

Keith-Falconer himself had apparently not caught the intimations of this call. Ever present as his spiritual interests were, his earthly work, as far as he could see, was Arabic. So, engaging a teacher for two hours a day, to Arabic he gave himself with heart and mind and strength. Soon he is able to make himself intelligible to servants and porters. But he is not satisfied. He must push on into the desert, where he will be cast upon Arabic entirely in dealing with the members of the caravan. He describes with boyish delight all the preparations for his projected camel-ride. He is racing about the bazaars all the afternoon making bargains. He is "laying in a store of vermicelli, rice, chocolate, salt, rope and cord, soap, sardines, preserved curry, cocoa, stew-pans, mugs, basins, knives, etc. . . . He thinks it best to take a revolver."

But all the plans came to nothing. An attack of fever so prostrated him that he determined to abandon the expedition and return to Europe.

The years 1882-3 he spent in Cambridge. The value of his scholastic work was recognised there by his appointment to the examinership for the Tyrwhitt University Scholarship, and for the Theological Tripos, as well as to a lectureship in Hebrew at Clare College.

In 1884 Keith-Falconer was married at Trinity Church, Cannes, to Miss Gwendolen Bevan. After a wedding tour in the Riviera and Italy he brought his wife to Cambridge, and lived during the May Term and the Long Vacation in Brookside.

Side by side with his tutorial and examining work Keith-Falconer had been still pursuing the study of Arabic, and was also engaged upon the laborious completion of a learned volume which was to be the outstanding academic achievement of his brief but brilliant career. This was his *Kalilah and Dimnah*, published early in 1885. It was a translation, with an introduction, of a Syriac MS. of the thirteenth and later centuries, which Dr. Wright had found in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and of which he had edited the text. The *Kalilah* is a collection of ethical fables which had their origin in India ; thence they passed

through translation to ancient Persia ; thence to Arabic, and from Arabic into Greek, Spanish, Hebrew and Syriac. It was this last which Keith-Falconer translated. So corrupt was the text that it was only by acute critical skill that its original condition could be surmised. It was here that Keith-Falconer won his laurels. Young as he was amongst Oriental scholars he showed, both in his conjectures and in those instances where he differed from Orientalists of distinction, the sure touch of an experienced hand. Professor Nöldeke, the foremost Orientalist of his day, in his review of the work said : “ We look forward with hope to meeting the young Orientalist, who has so early stepped forward as a Master, many a time yet, and not only in the region of Syriac.”

Had Keith-Falconer’s days been prolonged Professor Nöldeke’s hope would doubtless have been fulfilled. Early in the summer of 1886, as we shall see later, the brilliant young Oriental scholar received the crown of his academic career in his appointment as Lord Almoner’s Professor of Arabic, in connexion with which he delivered three lectures on the Pilgrimage to Mecca.

CHAPTER V.

THE EAST END WORKER.

IT might well seem to one who scans this brief record of remarkable academic achievement and athletic prowess, and who understands even a little of the tremendous toil and strain which lay behind it, that all other interests must of necessity have been excluded from a life so full. The evangelical interest that was evinced in Keith-Falconer's childhood, and later on in the days at Hitchin, might be supposed either to have dried up or else to have been flowing underground like the fabled river of antiquity. But this was not the case. Critics of his early days may have smiled at him for turning his energies aside into channels which were unusual, but they could not then realise that it was to be characteristic of Keith-Falconer that he was true till death to the interests he had once espoused. As a matter of fact, Keith Falconer's evangelical interest never flagged. Throughout all the fruitful track of his athletic and academic labours it ran with undiverted course and with growing volume, as a river runs towards the sea.

It has been noticed that as a child Keith-Falconer expounded the Scriptures to his brothers and sisters and even to the neighbouring cottagers. As a boy at school he made no secret of his religious convictions. "His religion," says Mr. G. W. E. Russell, a school-fellow, "was by no means self-contained and passive. He longed to make others better ; and he took an earnest and authoritative part against those forms of 'evil communications' which are always present in a greater or less degree in every assemblage of boys." His roll of texts hung on his wall at school, and their spirit possessed his heart and moulded his life.

He was still the evangelist in his pre-Cambridge days at Hitchin, and in his first term at Cambridge he had a class in the Choir School on Sunday mornings. In May, 1875, just when the strain of his first year's work would be at its highest, he threw himself heart and soul into the preparations that were being made for a visit to Cambridge of Mr. D. L. Moody. In October, 1876, at a time when he had begun to set himself strenuously to compress three years' work into two, in view of his change from the Mathematical to the Theological Tripos, just when a man might be excused for banishing all other thoughts from his mind, he broke his journey from the north to help on a good work at Stockton-on-Tees and, stripling as he

was, took part in debate with a famous secularist lecturer and reduced his opponent to silence. Throughout those two years, when he was toiling terribly, he was steadily working away at an East End Mission in Cambridge, helping it by his purse and his personal co-operation.

In August, 1878, he attended a meeting known as the Broadlands Conference. It was gathered by Lord Mount Temple, and had as its object the strengthening and deepening of the spiritual life. For this Keith-Falconer wrote the introduction to the report of the meeting. It is a masterly document, and shows a depth of thought and power of language that in a young man of twenty-two are remarkable. In the autumn of the same year a great movement was set on foot to purchase a theatre of somewhat doubtful reputation in the Barnwell district of Cambridge, and to use it for evangelistic purposes. Keith-Falconer was in the very forefront of this movement, and it was mainly due to his untiring advocacy of the scheme and his generous contributions and those of his friends that at last the theatre was purchased and its transformation effected. At the opening ceremony, at which such well-known speakers as Canon Hay Aitken and Mr. F. N. Charrington took part, Keith-Falconer also gave an address. Though he was not a brilliant speaker, the address he gave on that

occasion was so appropriate, so skilfully enlivened with metaphors drawn from the previous uses of the building, and at the same time so direct and so appropriate to his audience throughout, that it probably achieved far more than mere brilliance could possibly have effected. Here is an excerpt :—

“ What a marvellous transformation this place has undergone ! Our theatrical friends are familiar with transformation scenes, but they have got a novel one to-night, and I hope they have all come to look at it. And who can deny that it has been a transformation from bad to good ? It is all very well for the supporters of the theatre (especially when they have a pecuniary interest in the popularity of the drama) to say that theatre-going is educating and elevating and ennobling. I will only remark that if this place has been the means of educating, elevating, and ennobling a fallen humanity, in Barnwell at least, it has not got on with its work particularly fast, and the results do not exactly stare one in the face, and the sooner a more efficient system comes into play the better. There is one point about this transformation scene worthy of notice, and that is that the place is open, free to all. And this is like the Gospel of

the great God. It cost so much, and the sum to be paid was so vast, that we poor sinners, slave and struggle hard as we might, could not possibly make up the sum, and so we have been let off altogether, for the Saviour of the world has paid it for us.

“Now our prayer to God is that this transformation scene may be the earnest and precursor of many a transformation scene in the hearts and lives of men and women now careless and without God. I hear that an actor, quite unworthy of being named, who was performing here in the summer, on his benefit night made an oration to an admiring audience, and told them in effect that the poor players who had so long striven by their elevating and instructive performance to raise the tone and purify the morals of Barnwell, were at length to be supplanted by a company of religious hypocrites. ‘Acting,’ he said, ‘has not ceased in this place: there will be acting still.’ His opinion apparently was that religion is another name for hypocrisy. But he spoke the truth unwittingly. We trust that there will be some grand acting in connexion with this place. It requires no prophetic eye to see the time when men and women, now sunk low in sin and vice, will be constrained by the mighty power of a

Saviour's love and the solemnities of a coming eternity, proclaimed from this place, to act the magnificent part of the champions of God and the followers of Christ. For, remember, this life of ours may be viewed as a great drama. The God that made us has assigned to each his part, and written it in letters so plain and patent that he who runs may read. And soon the curtain must fall, and the players must depart to return no more."

Even this brief quotation is sufficient to show how little the exacting intellectual pursuits, which are often alleged to warp the spirit of man, had availed to warp his spirit or to deflect him from that supreme pursuit which was, after all, the master light of all his seeing. There are some Christian workers who feel themselves only capable of taking part in the more spectacular phases of Christian activity, such as the initiation or the culmination of a great scheme, but who shrink from its laborious and pedestrian details. Such workers doubtless have their uses. It was characteristic of Ion Keith-Falconer that the red-letter days in which he appeared before the public were only the revelation of a part, and of the least part, of a sustained and detailed activity of which the public knew nothing. He was not only to the fore in the initiation of

the Barnwell Mission Hall and in the thrill of its opening day, but we find him afterwards busily engaged in instituting for it a library of wholesome literature for which he himself carefully selected many of the volumes ; and some eight years after its opening, when he had dedicated his great gifts as an Oriental scholar to missionary work at Aden, we find that in one of his earliest letters from that new world of work he still has the needs of Barnwell upon his heart, and writes home offering £50 a year for two years in order that a fund may be raised for a missionary for the Barnwell district.

It will be remembered that whilst a schoolboy at Harrow Ion Keith-Falconer had come into contact with Mr. Charrington, and had visited the scene of his great work in the East End of London. Here, too, the seed of interest once sown bore fruit a hundred-fold in his life of loyal and constant affections. From that day the eager young student had followed with increasing interest the marvellous development of Mr. Charrington's work in all its stages, from the East End Conference Hall, accommodating 600 people, to the tent at the corner of White Horse Lane, Mile-End Road, and then to the better site at the broadest part of Mile-End Road, where the great Wimbledon Camp tent was erected, and afterwards the

Assembly Hall, capable of holding 2,000 persons. Here there was an average attendance on week-nights of 600. On Sundays the building was crowded to its utmost capacity and hundreds had to be turned away.

It was Keith-Falconer, with his acute insight, who initiated in connexion with this work what he called "preaching the Gospel from the walls of the city." In the neighbourhood of the Hall, on walls and hoardings, placards were posted up containing texts of Scripture, direct personal appeals and short pointed stories with pictures. The method was at that time untried, and is an indication of the freshness which the young worker brought to bear upon his work.

Nor was he behind in response to the demands made upon his personal sympathy and material assistance. During a hard winter he helped in the provision of no less than twenty thousand meals for the poor, between January 1st and February 14th, besides assisting in the organisation of relief for over three hundred families every week in their homes. But as would be expected in one in whom the fundamental quality of the true missionary was paramount, Keith-Falconer found his chief interest in individual help. Records of this are naturally few, but those which do exist reveal how thorough, how wise,

and how truly sympathetic his help was. His eager advocacy led him into at least one exciting episode. Mr. Charrington's work had been so successful that neighbouring music halls of an undesirable character had begun to suffer in attendance, and the opposition of the managers was aroused. False charges were brought against Mr. Charrington of creating a disturbance in the street outside the Music Halls, and attempting to turn intending visitors away. One of his fellow-workers relates how he remembers among the large crowd outside the police station one figure which stood out head and shoulders above the others—perfectly white. It was Keith-Falconer, who had been covered with flour by the frequenters of the music hall.

So great was the success of the work that it became evident that the Assembly Hall, large as it was, was far too small to accommodate the hosts who sought admission. Keith-Falconer had written a plea inviting subscriptions for a building that should seat nearly 5,000 people and contain a Coffee Palace and a book-saloon. Before he left for Arabia he had the joy of seeing the project for which he had laboured crowned with success. His biographer, the Rev. Robert Sinker, relates how, in the summer of 1886, he accompanied Keith-Falconer to see the building, and they sat with Mr. Charrington surveying the great

Hall from the central point of the Upper Gallery. "As we sat there," says Mr. Sinker, "I could not but be struck with the similar expression on the faces of the two men. It was one in which joy and keen resolve and humble thankfulness were strangely blended."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSIONARY TO THE ARABS.

IT has been said that Nature never makes a leap. To the student of Christian biography it often seems that the same law holds in the realm of Grace.

Ion Keith-Falconer's offer of himself as a foreign missionary was no surprise to those who knew him well. It was rather the last and necessary step in a path which he had been treading from the first. The faith of his fathers found expression in his early childhood. His interest in the Bible led him into the study of its original languages. Hebrew led him into the study of Arabic. His pursuit of Arabic took him to Egypt in order to become acquainted with the language in its colloquial form. A man of his keen evangelical spirit could not thus be brought into contact with the Mohammedan world without viewing it from the standpoint of the Christian missionary. The partition was very thin between the East End worker and the Missionary to the East.

When, therefore, in February, 1885, he read in *The Christian* a summary of a powerful plea

by General Haig for Christian Missions in the neighbourhood of Aden, it was most natural that before the month was out he should have made enquiries about the conditions of missionary work in that part and should have determined to give them a trial.

In view of what was to seem a mysteriously swift cutting short of a life of great promise, it is necessary to state that Ion Keith-Falconer took every preliminary care before committing himself to the brief final stage of his career. It had been pointed out that the qualities needed were evangelistic zeal, linguistic accomplishment, wisdom in organisation and in dealing with men, and, lastly, ability to endure the heat of a torrid climate. He had been tested in all points but the last. Could he stand the climate? He made exhaustive enquiries about the climatic conditions. The answers were encouraging. With his usual sagacity he determined to go out for a few months to the field to make a personal experiment before finally committing himself to the work that called him.

Setting off on October 7th, 1885, with the gay, buoyant spirit that characterised him, after weathering successfully a severe storm in the Bay of Biscay and spending one day at Malta, he passed down the hundred miles of the Suez Canal and through the Red Sea, and

reached Aden on October 21st. The bare black volcanic rocks of the little peninsula, rising abruptly from the white sands of the beach, under the glare of a pitiless sun, presented little that was attractive to the eye. The town of Aden, which is reached by a road winding amongst barren hills, lies in the crater of an extinct volcano, and being walled in on almost every side, naturally suffers from the heat. But across the sandy isthmus that runs northward and connects Aden with the mainland there lies at a distance of some ten miles the town of Shaikh Othman, which has communication by road with Bir Achmad on the west and El-Hautah on the north.

It was to Shaikh Othman, as lying amongst the Mohammedan population and as being the necessary gateway to Aden from the interior, that Ion Keith-Falconer's thoughts were turned as the best centre for operations.

Living for the time in Aden he began his methodical programme at once. All the morning he spent in reading Arabic ; about four o'clock he went into the town and conversed with the natives, and at 7.30 returned to dinner. Whilst thus preparing himself systematically for future missionary work and testing the climatic conditions, he was at the same time deliberately surveying the field of operations, and arriving at unhurried

conclusions as to strategic points and methods of attack. His first thoughts about Shaikh Othman as a centre were confirmed. It was unoccupied by any other mission ; it was more purely Mohammedan than Aden ; the climate was better than that of Aden, and it was a good base of operations for expeditions into the interior. Two methods of activity particularly commended themselves to him, educational work amongst children and medical work amongst the sick. It was characteristic of his mature and balanced judgment that, in surveying the field, he contemplated not only the work which he might accomplish, but the possibility of his being taken from it at any time. In a letter written early in 1886 he says : “I want to build at Shaikh Othman, and pass over the buildings to the Free Church, so that whatever happens to me, the work may be cared for by them.”

Arrangements were made at the end of February, 1886, that a plot of land at Shaikh Othman should be reserved for Keith-Falconer till the end of the year. He had had full opportunities of gaining an insight into the needs of the population—their gross ignorance and superstition, their unrelieved physical suffering and their miserable servitude ; he had also by his tentative conversations found a ready response to the message of the Gospel.

Last, but not least, he had discovered that he was able to bear without serious inconvenience the inevitable discomforts and hardships involved in life in such a region, and he believed that the climate had for him no perils which his constitution could not withstand. Determining, therefore, to return to Shaikh Othman for good in the autumn, he left Aden on March 6th, 1886, and arrived in the best of health in England in the following month.

The incidents of that seven months' interval in Great Britain have about them, for those who know the sequel, a waft of death. While they seemed to be the preparations of an eager young warrior for the battle, they really partook of the nature of a triumphant and final farewell. It was as if every one of the many interests to which Keith-Falconer's ardent spirit had been pledged with lifelong devotion now gathered about him to lay its laurel on his brow before he went forth never to return.

First and foremost, the outward symbol of his crowning self-dedication was given before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. He not only placed himself and his brilliant gifts of oriental scholarship at the disposal of the Foreign Missions Committee, but undertook the whole cost of the building of the Mission House and Hospital, and the payment of £300 annually for the support of

a medical missionary. With noble delicacy of feeling he suggested that the payment of this sum should be made through the Treasurer of the Foreign Missions Committee, in order that the medical missionary might feel himself his equal rather than his subordinate. The meeting in the Great Hall at Edinburgh at which this offer was publicly ratified was worthy of the occasion. The place of assembly was crowded from floor to ceiling. The young missionary was listened to with the profoundest interest, while in a masterly address marked with fulness of knowledge, simplicity, practical wisdom and single-hearted devotion, he depicted the general spiritual need of the Mohammedans, the particular conditions of his work, and the methods which he proposed to adopt. When, at a later period of the evening, four young candidates for the mission field were introduced to the Assembly and stood up to receive the Moderator's Commission, Keith-Falconer said to the Secretary, near whom he sat: "How much I should have liked to have stood up with them! Is it too late even now?" But though it seemed wiser at this point not to interfere with the settled plan, Ion Keith-Falconer had been as unanimously and cordially received and as fully accredited as if he had taken his place among them.

Hardly had this great occasion passed when

Keith-Falconer's devotion to Arabic studies received its culminating recognition in his appointment as Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge. One of his reasons for accepting this high honour was that it would count as an asset in his missionary work. The conditions of the professorship allowed of prolonged absence from Cambridge, and would permit him to deliver the lectures connected with the office on the occasions of his furlough from the mission field. The first series of lectures he was to deliver on the eve of his departure.

So completely had he mastered the art of stenography that the MS. from which he read his lectures in connexion with the Professorship of Arabic were written, with the exception of an Arabic word here and there, entirely in shorthand; so completely was he at home with stenography that no one in his audience would have guessed that he was not reading from ordinary script. As if to give a farewell emphasis to this interest the proof sheets of his article on "Shorthand" in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* arrived when he was in the midst of the preparation of his Arabic Lectures, and the many other pressing engagements that naturally accompanied his impending departure. But this task, too, he discharged with the same

deliberation and the same minute care which he bestowed on all his work.

As if not one note of his favourite pursuits and pastimes should be left untouched at this season of farewell, we find him towards the end of August acting as judge at a bicycle race of the Y.M.C.A. Cycling Club, and taking the chair at the Annual Supper of the combined athletic clubs of the Association. The London Bicycle Club also, of which he had been uninter-ruptedly president since 1877, hearing of his coming departure, ante-dated their annual dinner at the Holborn Restaurant in order to enable him to be present and preside. On these occasions his speeches were full of buoyant humour, but not without graver touches of wise advice in the true function of bodily exercise and amusement.

The strenuous character of his last days in Great Britain may be estimated from the fact that the preparation of his professional lectures, besides a mass of other reading, included as an incident the learning of Dutch in three weeks in order to master an important work on the Pilgrimage to Mecca ; and that all this had to be carried out amidst the distractions of sorting and packing a large number of papers and books, of bidding farewell to numberless friends, and of preparing and delivering addresses on the nature of his future work, besides attending

to the thousand and one other calls which his vivid life entailed.

The last lecture was over at three o'clock, and the young professor, as his biographer relates, "passed out of the lecture room by the great gate of Trinity College, through which he had gone in and out almost daily, and across the Market Place, on which in old days he had so often gazed from the windows of his lodgings in the intervals of work. Arriving at the house of a friend with whom he was staying in St. Andrew's Street, he laid aside the University cap and gown, never again to be worn by him. The train for London was to leave at seven. Interrupted constantly, even during a hasty dinner, by persons to whom orders had to be given, Keith-Falconer, in the midst of a chaos of packing and a multiplicity of details of business, and on the eve of a journey half across the world, was as calm and undisturbed as if he were simply leaving home for a few days." To the classical student the lines irresistibly recur :

" non aliter tamen
 Dimovit obstantes propinquos
 Et populum redditus morantem
 Quam si clientum longa negotia
 Diiudicata lite relinqueret
 Tendens Venafranos in agros
 Aut Lacedaemonium Tarentum." *

His last night in England he spent in the East End with his old friend, Mr. Charrington. The next night he was speeding on his way to the East.

* “ He motioned from his path

 The opposing kindred, the retarding crowd,
 Calmly as if, some client’s tedious suit
 Closed by his judgment, to Venafrian plains
 Or mild Tarentum, built
 By antique Spartans, went his pleasant way.”

Lord Lytton’s Translation.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION AND CHARACTERISTICS.

THE rest is soon told. Where the ordinary missionary biography begins, the story of Ion Keith-Falconer's life concludes.

By January, 1887, we find this gifted son of Cambridge—body, mind, and soul the best product of Christian civilisation—applying all his trained energies to the sacred task of communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ignorant and disease-ridden community near the burning sands of Aden. Now he is going on journeys on a camel with his doctor to carry healing to the sick; now he is conducting tiresome negotiations with an avaricious Arab for the erection of his mission buildings; now he is visiting from house to house and leaving copies of the gospels with the few who can read; now he is dismissing a man in his employ for drunkenness; now he is putting the Moslems to shame by helping to carry to the hospital an old man left lying by the roadside in great pain; now he is studying Hindustani and learning texts of the Bible and of the Koran by heart; now turning for

recreation to his English books or writing one of his delightful letters home.

Into all this work he carried the same method and determination which he had carried into his study and his cycling in the days gone by. The work moved steady and clean as the astronomic year. But there occurred with distressing frequency in his letters references to attacks of fever. At first the attacks are mentioned as being over. He is convalescent. He is well and strong. Then again the fever. A day down with it, then a day free; then a day down again. Then a reference to twelve long weeks of helplessness, during which, however, he has been able to do quite a lot of reading: several of Scott's novels; Besant's *Children of Gibeon*; Pressensé's *Early Years of the Christian Church*; Lives of "Livingstone," "Simeon," and "Judson." On May 3rd he wrote that he hoped D.V. to be in Cambridge in the May Term, 1888.

Three days later it was clear that the fever had returned. He was unable to rise from his bed. Yet, as he remarked to his wife, he did not feel, as on the occasion of other attacks, in the least depressed. He had his books about him—his Bible, Hebrew Old Testament, and Hindustani Grammar—and read a good deal.

On Monday, May 9th, he was much weaker,

and at times his mind wandered. But even in his weakness he braced himself to pray—an effort which only those who have suffered from fever understand : his prayer was a fervent thanksgiving for his doctor's nursing, a petition for restoration to health that he might be able to carry on the work begun, and an intercession that God would graciously dispose the hearts of friends at home towards the cause of missions. Early in the evening a nurse arrived to relieve the doctor and Mrs. Keith-Falconer, who had been in constant attendance and were in danger of breaking down themselves. At about 9.30 he fell asleep, and his wife and the doctor took the opportunity to snatch a few hours' rest. As he was still sleeping quietly at 4 a.m. the nurse herself rested.

When Mrs. Keith-Falconer called to her in the early morning, one look at her patient told all. "He was lying on his back, with eyes half-open, and hands resting on the bed by his sides. The whole attitude and expression indicated a sudden and painless end, as if it had taken place during sleep, there being no indication whatever of his having tried to move or speak."

On the evening of the same day, amid the wild and dreary surroundings of the Aden Cemetery, he was laid to rest ; the dust returned

to the earth as it was and the spirit to God Who gave it.

* * * * *

One of the outstanding features of this brief but crowded life was loyalty—loyalty to his friends, loyalty to his interests, loyalty to his convictions. “Having loved his own he loved them to the end.” Dr. Cowen, his colleague, has recorded that all through the time of his residence at Shaikh Othman he loved to talk of his old school and college friendships, some of them dating back ten or fifteen years or more. When he was a Harrow Schoolboy he became acquainted with Mr. F. N. Charrington, and it was with Mr. Charrington thirteen years later that he spent his last night in England. It is to be noted that that acquaintance did not remain stationary, but deepened through the years into intimate association with the other’s work. It was the same with his many interests. What his friends at first mistook for intellectual dissipation or even instability of purpose was in reality the reaching forth of a many-sided energy to interests which he pursued with life-long tenacity. He took up the unusual subject of shorthand at Harrow, and afterwards became one of the highest authorities on shorthand.

in the country. He had shown as a boy a deep interest in Old Testament Lessons, and he received the highest honours that Cambridge can bestow for Old Testament Scholarship. As a boy, too, he found his recreation in cycling, and he lived to become the Amateur Champion of England. Lastly, as a boy, when most of his school-fellows were being prepared for Confirmation, and when it would have been the easier course to conform with the majority, he astonished his tutor by declaring himself in heart and intention a member of the Free Church of Scotland ; and to the Free Church of Scotland in his manhood he gave the sublimest gift it is possible for any man to give.

That Ion Keith-Falconer was blessed with this world's goods must not conceal from us another trait of his character—his generosity. The instinct that prompted him as a child to part with his recently purchased sweets to the poor boy, was with him to the end, and was manifested in many ways : in his gratuitous help to poor students at Cambridge, in his gifts to the Barnwell Mission, in his assistance to Dr. Lagarde of Göttingen, in his royal donations to Mr. Charrington's work, and, finally, in the complete gift of himself and all his powers to his fellow-men.

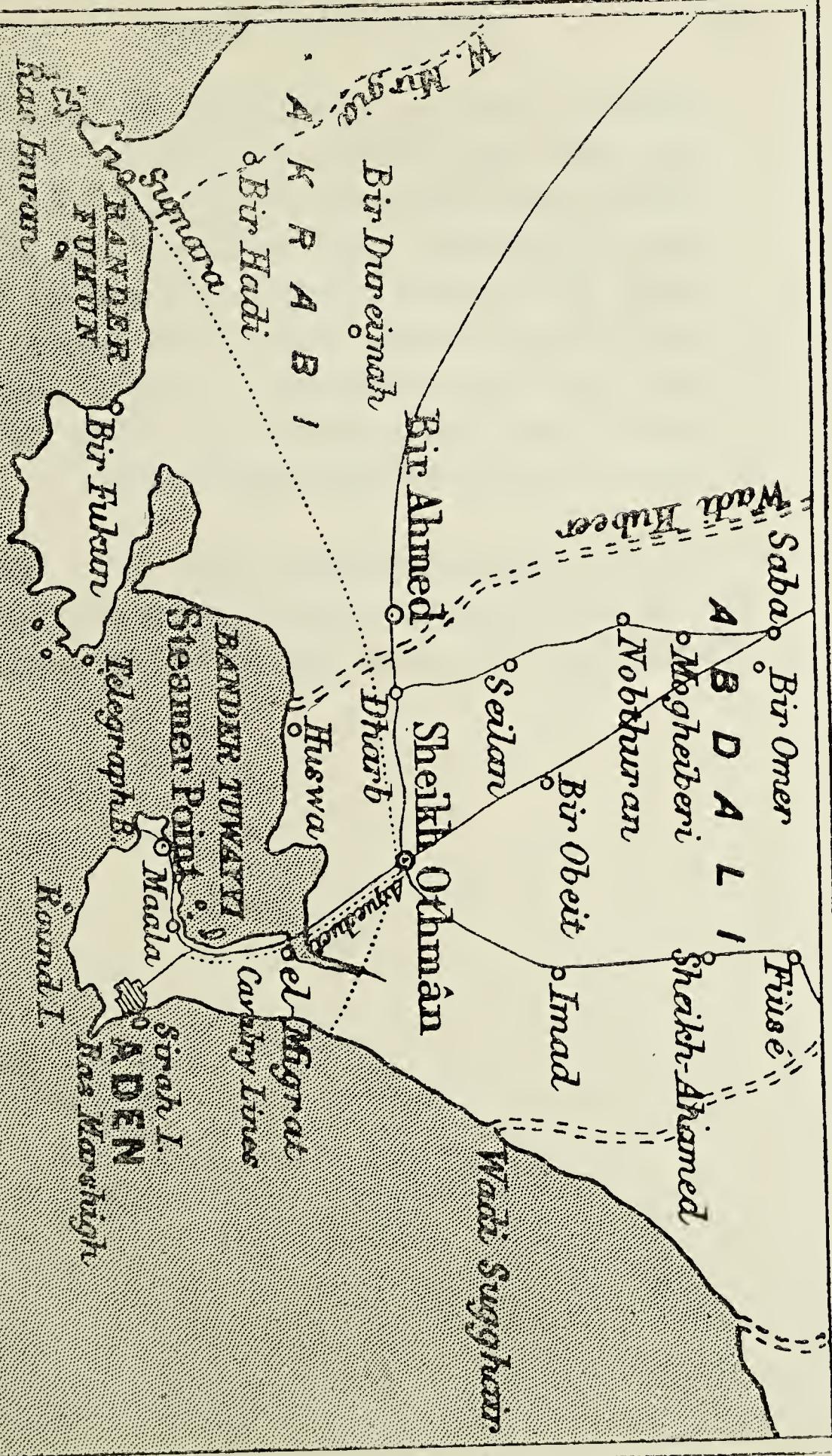
Ion Keith-Falconer was essentially manly. There was not a touch of sentimentality in

his religion, and perhaps it would be true to say that there was little mysticism, except in so far as every Christian is a mystic. The type of religious life which found its expression in him was sober, wise, practical, straightforward. He combined with the passion of the student the restlessness of the man of action. The laborious task of poring for hours over the tangle of corrupt Syriac manuscripts never warped his spirit from bold and adventurous undertakings. In the precocious maturity of his young manhood he retained the humour and vivacity of a boy.

* * * *

Ion Keith-Falconer died at the age of thirty-one. The mystery of the cutting short of a life of glorious apostolic promise will always trouble the Christian Church. It was so before with Henry Martyn and R. Murray M'Cheyne ; it has been so since with G. H. C. Macgregor. But those have probably been right who have interpreted the dispensation as a call from God to fill up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ. Not once or twice in the history of the Church the death of her soldiers in the high places of the field has resulted in the enrolment of a multitude of new recruits. Let the trumpet call to Arabia come from the lips of him who now lies in his Arabian grave :

“ I wish to make an appeal. There must be some who will read these words, or who, having the cause of Christ at heart, have ample independent means, and are not fettered by genuine home ties. Perhaps you are content with giving annual subscriptions and occasional donations, and taking a weekly class ? Why not give yourselves, money, time and all, to the foreign field ? Our own country is bad enough, but comparatively many must, and do, remain to work at home, while very few are in a position to go abroad. Yet how vast is the Foreign Mission Field ! Ought you not to consider seriously what your duty is ? The heathen are in darkness and we are asleep. Perhaps you try to think that you are meant to remain at home, and induce others to go. Not so. By going yourself you will produce a tenfold more powerful effect. You can give and pray for missions wherever you are, you can send descriptive letters to the missionary meetings which will be much more effective than second-hand anecdotes gathered by you from others, and you will help the committees finely by sending them the results of your experience. We have a great and imposing war-office, but a very small army. You have wealth snugly invested in the funds, you are strong and



healthy, you are at liberty to live where you like and occupy yourself as you like. While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism or of Islam, the burden of proof rests upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the foreign mission-field."

That is Keith-Falconer's last call. If men hear it and respond, the spikenard of his gifted life will not have been poured out in vain.



